

Social Service PILOT and Comparative Impact Study Committee
Conference Room 2 7:30 PM Memorial Building Framingham, Ma

Minutes

January 31, 2006

Note: If a word or sentence is blue and underlined click for the link.

Note: A tape recording of these minutes is available upon request

Attendance: Bob Berman, Yaakov Cohn, Dawn Harkness, Cynthia Laurora., Laurie Lee, Wes Ritchie, Nick Sanchez, Steve Orr, John Speranza, Jim Palmer

Meeting called to order by Chair Berman at 7:30 PM.

Review of Minutes

1/17, 1/19, 1/24

Motion to accept corrected minutes of 1/17/06

Second

Vote: 9 in favor 0 opposed 0 abstain

Motion to accept minutes of 1/19/06

Second

Vote: 9 in favor 0 opposed 0 abstain

Motion to accept the corrected minutes of 1/24/06

Second

Vote: 8 in favor 0opposed 1 abstain

Education Update

The questionnaire was sent to the information center and the superintendent.

A meeting with Wes and Peter Dewar will happen soon and the Charter School questionnaire will be sent to the clerk to be sent out.

It was suggested that the committee plan to invite the school respond-ees to come in to the committee and discuss the answers to the questions.

Letter to SSA's regarding the survey

On January 19, 2006 The PILOT/Impact committee met with representatives from SMOC, Advocates and Wayside to discuss the survey of October 2005.

The committee determined that the following issues needed clarification:

- **Facility locations:** The committee respects and understands the position that any agency takes with regard to non-disclosure of facility location and privacy concerns for clients; however, as acknowledged at the meeting, most location information is available and easily obtained through public records. The committee will continue to research such records and use that information for the duration of the study. While the committee will

not specifically describe the activities at any one location, the use of the addresses in the final report will be used as deemed necessary by the committee.

- **Framingham Resident:** The definition of what is a Framingham resident for the purpose of this survey and the study was discussed. For the purpose of this study the committee has defined a Framingham resident as a person or family who was a resident of the Town of Framingham prior to utilizing any services, including housing and/or shelter.
- **Program questions:** The details asked for each program run by an agency might create an undue burden on the person or persons providing this information. While the committee is interested in as much detail as possible, some programs might be amenable to categorization, thus, if providing information regarding the types of programs i.e. residential, rehabilitative, outreach...would make this a doable task we would appreciate such effort.

We would appreciate any survey answers you can provide for us by February 14, 2006.

The committee is interested in continuing our discussions with all social service agencies in Framingham. In light of this, we have arranged to hold a forum with representatives from all agencies on March 8, 2006 at 7 PM in the Public Hearing Room, Memorial Building , 150 Concord Street, Framingham. Details of this event are enclosed.

Thank you

Bob Berman

Yaakov Cohn

Laurie Lee

Dawn Harkness

Cynthia Laurora

Steven Orr

Jim Palmer

Wes Ritchie

Nicolas Sanchez

John Speranza

Changes include:

Making the “due” date 2/21/06 to give them extra time

Nick moved to add the following sentence following the due date: If you are unable to complete the questionnaire, we would appreciate receiving a comprehensive data set that would reflect the impact of your agency on the Town of Framingham.

Nick rationale is that he wants to include this statement to give the agencies every chance to provide information and input regarding the benefits to the town from their agency.

This provides the agencies an opportunity to provide whatever they want.

Dawn was concerned that we are asking for information that we have no right to have.

Nick suggested he amend his motion to specify the data set as being of a public nature to protect any privacy issues.

Dawn spoke against this motion.

Cynthia spoke in favor of the motion.

Steve spoke in favor of the motion.

Laurie, Bob and Wes spoke in favor.

There were some concerns about the potential interpretation of this and all data collected by the committee; however, that should not interfere with the collection of all data.

Vote on Nick's Amendment: 8 in favor 0 opposed 2 abstain

Vote on the letter as amended: 8 in favor 0 opposed 2 abstain

Work Group Reports:

Background

Laurie discussed the summary she sent out of her trip to Waltham and Marlborough to get the tax exempt property list and more information regarding the social services in those communities.

On Thursday 1/26 I spoke with the Waltham planning department, specifically Ted Fields in charge of CDBG and social service issues. I discussed what we were looking for and the list I assembled and asked for his advice to be sure it is complete. He said the only other thing he could suggest was to get the list of just tax exempt properties and see if I can find any SSA's that I could not find from the online version.

On Friday 1/27, I visited the Waltham City Hall and got the list of tax exempt properties (\$9.50) I found the following 7 properties and will put them on the list:

Waltham Properties: 300 Florence Road

The Edinberg Center: 34 Banks

North Suffolk Mental Health: 16 Outlook

Jonas Willis Parmenter: 542 Main; 321 Crescent; 23 Appleton

Friends of Hurley House: 81 Pine

Over the course of assembling this list I spoke with Al Lima from the Marlboro Planning department for help in gathering information about sites in Marlboro.

On Friday 1/26 I spoke with the Marlboro assessor. I requested a copy of the tax exempt property list to compare with the list I assembled. I then went to City Hall and picked up the list (\$4)

There were no additions from that list.

I found one other addition for Natick from the improved version of Guidestar: Thom Center 251 Central Street

And I will add that to the list.

She followed up that she sent both the Waltham and Marlborough contacts her final list for their comments.

She also said that she spoke to the Thom Center in Natick and was told they are the corporate headquarters and do not provide services in Natick, thus it should not be included.

Nick moved that we accept the contiguous list of services and the Waltham list as an accepted living list.

Second

Vote: 9 in favor 0 opposed 1 abstain

Cynthia described the work the background group is doing on compiling an inventory of programs in Framingham. Her assignment was SMOC, Wayside and Advocates, although all agencies will be done. She presented an inventory of programs she compiled for SMOC, in Framingham. She compared this to Jerry Desilets list and had a few additions. She will meet with SMOC to confirm the information from the website and check the location of the programs. She also commented that it is a list in process and will hopefully record information regarding numbers of people served.

Laurie mentioned that she had a new address to add to the living list.

Laurie added that she forgot to make a correction to the Southborough list. The Center for Autism is categorized as a school 904, not a 905, and should have been excluded before the vote but that it needed to be excluded.

The group discussed this as being similar to The Learning Center, which is excluded.

Laurie mentioned that she spoke to someone at the Learning Center and two of the properties are considered Dorms, although the third, might be considered a residential center.

Motion to include the new listing from the NECC on Parker Road

Second

Vote: 9 in favor 0 opposed 1 abstain

Public Safety

Laurie sent around her report of her recent visit to Chris Murtaugh and Chief Carl to clarify some issues about data and definitions. She needed to have a better understanding of how the department deals with incomplete data and the reliability and comparability of the Uniform Crime Data with the Police Data.

Monday January 30, 2006. I met with Lt Murtaugh, crime statistics, regarding some questions I had with data analysis. Chief Carl approved this and attended the meeting. Bob was not able to attend. Below are the questions I asked and the answers provided.

1. Does the UCR data correspond to Framingham's Part I offenses? Yes, they should, although earlier years might not be as reliable. We use the data when we have to but with reservations and full disclosure. I recommend that you use the departments numbers from 2000-2005. For this data we will actually go to the police department of the town we are comparing Framingham to and get the data right from them. I suggest you do that for the 2000-2005 years. Before that, even 2000, the numbers were not as reliable

2. How accurate are the UCR numbers? UCR numbers are the oldest comparable statistic but they have flaws that need to be recognized. The reliability varies with the departmental procedure for "cleaning" data, reporting data and recording data. We actually have that problem even when we get data right from the police dept. directly. There is no guarantee that any other town "cleans" their data like we do. Then there is the loss of precision in translation. NIBRS is supposed to be better but it is not fully up and running.

3. The UCR is missing a month for 2000, is the Framingham number of 1528 part I crimes, compatible with the UCR totals? Yes. It should be. The total part I crime for 2000 is 1528.

4. How would I get this information for 2005 for Framingham? **Chris Murtaugh just finished a new report with statistics for the town from 2000-2005. He will send it as soon as the Chief approves it.**

5. UCR Data from other towns that are in our comparison with Framingham is sometimes incomplete, similar to the 2000 data for Framingham. Is there a strategy to use if a particular year in another community has only partial data? **Not really. Note the incompleteness and if it possible to adjust do so or choose different years. It is best to also pick a few towns and go to their police department and get exact numbers for 2000-2005 and compare that way.**

6. Is there a way to measure the trends over time which does not focus on any one year in particular? Doing this might weigh one bad year out of many good years.. **Not really. Look for anomalies and try not to use that year.**

7. Is it meaningful to consider the change in violent crime versus total crime especially for small communities when the numbers are small? **Didn't get an exact answer. Chief Carl answered that he thought the impact of social services would be seen more in property crimes than violent crimes. There is some discrepancy in the number of violent crimes for Framingham in the 2000 UCR data and the town number.**

8. How did you get the information for the other communities you studied? **UCR and they visited communities. They recommended Brookline and Waltham.**

They urged we study these two communities in depth and suggested Fitchburg as well. Discussing the 2000-2005 numbers with the various departments will also offer insight and information into the data. Especially if there are some years with anomalies.

9. Do all calls get responded to? **No, but Framingham's CAD calls, Yes. Framingham data gets cleaned out. Non responded calls are taken out of the final number of calls, so all Framingham CAD calls are calls responded to. But other towns don't necessarily do that. It makes comparisons tricky. When you go to the departments for information, be sure to find out how they handle their data for calls.**

10. Are the list of numbers for the addresses we provided calls with responses? **Yes** How does this relate to the total number of calls above? **The CAD calls include calls for accidents and alarms. The numbers provided are CAD calls for 23 months. It might be interesting to categorize the number of calls. Then you can get a cleaner number to compare to for non accident calls. (they will attempt to get this info in a timely fashion)**

11. Do these numbers include calls for incidents caused by people who live at these addresses but might not occur at these addresses? If not, is there a way to get that information? **No. There is no way to get that.**

12. Can you suggest a way for us to determine the average number of calls per address in Framingham so we can have a comparison for these numbers? **Yes. One way is to determine, and divide total calls by, the total number of housing units and the total number of commercial units. That will give the average number of calls per unit. However, the CAD calls include accident calls. We will try to get a number of calls that are separated, i.e. subtract out the accident calls. Then the other calls would be the number to use when determining the average.**

13. What other measures of trends and potential impacts do you use?

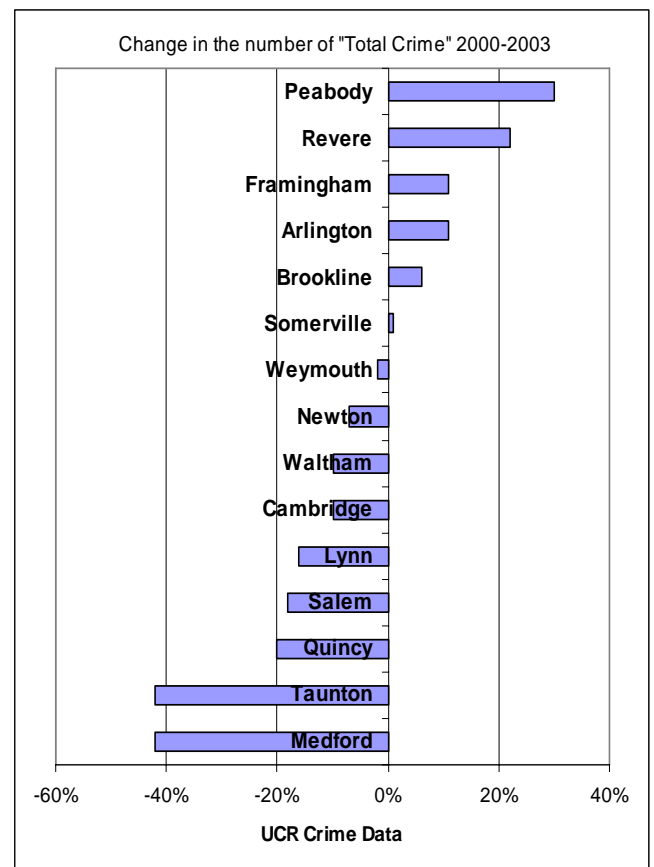
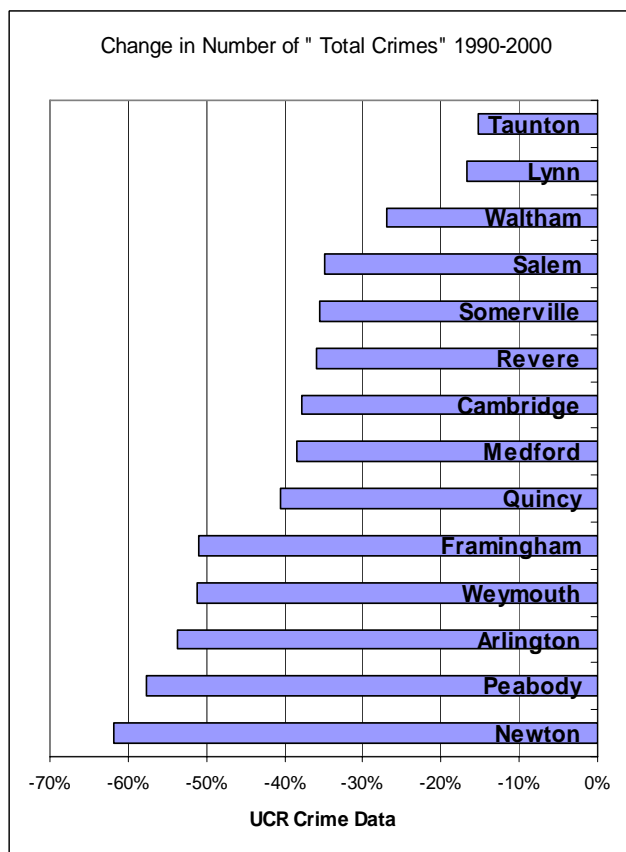
One difficulty is that we do not have specific information of who is responsible for some calls and if they are from an agency (see #11). From our studies and statistics online you can see where our

downtown effort is focused and where the crimes are. For example, in the area we define as downtown, 25% of calls occur and 40% of crimes.(see study)
 I recommend you call Jack McDermitt at Northeastern University. He is an expert on this issue and could give you advice. He has done many studies.

Laurie mentioned that the contiguous group has many holes in the reporting of data. Most of the other group was doable. She is still working on that set. Laurie looked at 1990-2000, and 2000-2003 and Nick looked at 1992-2001 independently.

Nick also recommended looking at NIBRS.

For example, Laurie plotted the towns she could get data for.



Laurie explained that this is preliminary information. In addition, using the Police Department data directly from 2000-20005 was recommended and will be provided by the chief. This data is State and Federal data, government sources, and comes from each of the individual towns. It is official data and the town police department is identified as the source. But there has to be some recognition of variability and validity of how each community enters a crime or reports a crime.

Nick thought the change for making the statistics comparable occurred in 1989.

It was suggested that we focus on a few towns and focus on the police data directly.

It was asked if these numbers reflect acquittals, convictions vs. non convictions or are they just calls.

Bob thought just calls. This is just the work the police did.

We need to verify if the UCR data is strictly the calls.

Laurie mentioned that this is only for Part I crimes. There are also Part II crimes and the details of this are on the police website.

Laurie also discussed a strategy to determine the average number of calls for each address to compare with the information we have on individual addresses.

Discussion of the types of calls included: motor accidents, alarms, crimes. What about being stopped for a traffic violation? A ticket? Does that get reported as a call?

Laurie will follow up with some specifics regarding the data guidelines from the government.

Property & Income

Laurie and Nick visited the Town's Assessor Mike Flynn after being asked by the committee to determine the assessment of non profit property. He said all property is assessed the same.

January 25, 2006

Meeting with Town of Framingham Assessor Mike Flynn

1. Do towns and cities adhere to the guidelines from the State for determining property assessment?

Yes. A full evaluation is done every 3 years and re-evaluations every year in between.

The State is very strict and insists that all communities adhere to the guidelines. It is very time consuming, especially the re-evaluations years. The State is continually asking for different versions of the data, or more information, spreadsheets...

Follow up: the details given in the FAQ's regarding assessment on the website are carefully followed

2. What happens if the State doesn't agree with an assessment?

Out of the 351 cities and towns, the FY2006 assessments have not been approved for 30. They will not approve them until they are satisfied that all guidelines are being followed. The State is very particular about the re-evaluations of State owned lands, which they make payments on. The State makes payments on Prisons (MCI), State Parks (Callahan), State school, land surrounding the reservoir. They determine a total dollar value payment for the entire state and divide it by all the land they pay for. Then the towns and cities get their portion. Use of land does not have an effect. The State does not reimburse for the Armory, State Police Barracks, Court House..

3. Are all properties assessed equally?

Yes. There are no allowances for evaluations or reevaluations.

4. Are taxed properties assessed differently than tax exempt properties?

No. Tax exempt properties are evaluated exactly the same as taxable properties.

5. Are properties owned or used by social service agencies assessed differently than other properties?

No. All properties are assessed equally.

6. How do renovations impact an assessment?

They look at the permits pulled. If it is considered mechanical or normal maintenance, roof, windows, a/c, heating, it does not convert dollar for dollar. The impact of renovations will depend on the sale prices for properties. There is usually a smaller impact than one would think and smaller than the permit value. Some renovations would have no impact on the actual sale price for the property.

location of the property, the type of property and the neighbors would add into the equation.

The evaluations are based on sale prices, narrow sale prices. i.e. limited to the neighborhood of the property. The factors taken into consideration are: lot size, style, age, size as well as: where the house is, type of home and the neighborhood.

7. Does new housing construction affect the total assessment?

Minimally to not at all in Framingham and towns with similar maturity.

8. How does a government assessment compare to an outside, private appraisal?

Outside appraisals are very expensive and they do not have to be justified. Town and City Assessors are monitored by the State and the oversight requires many levels of justification. Framingham pays about \$15/parcel for assessments. (note from Laurie: 26,734 properties = \$401,100)

The actual values determined for appraisal and assessment are not that different, except for the time lag for a town to evaluate an entire community. However, doing the entire town offers a level of uniformity that an independent appraiser cannot achieve.

9. How are the property codes determined?

Property codes are determined by use.

10. Why is the Salvation Army building in Framingham coded 905?

The predominant use of the building is for charitable work. A very minor section of it is used as a church. The rest is used to provide services.

11. Do any properties pay a PILOT?

The Lawrence school on Lincoln Street houses medical condo's that pay rent and a formal PILOT based on % : they have a 50 year lease.

Of course the State pays for the properties mentioned.

Pelham pays an excise payment of \$75,000 a year under chapter 121A.

12. Do you have any experience with PILOT's?

Yes. I worked in Boston and helped create and implement their PILOT program. In 1997 I created a PILOT and presented a detailed report on how to implement it for the BoS. It did not get instituted. I will look and see if it is still around. In Boston, the assessor is in charge of the negotiations and implementation. The PILOT program there has enabled a strong community connection between the City

and the PILOT payee. The City has also found many techniques to promote and encourage PILOT 's. It has been a success.

In Framingham, the BoS has that power to negotiate. They also have the authority to authorize someone to be responsible for the negotiations and implementation.

13. Do you have any recommendations for the PILOT committee?

Yes. PILOT's need to be flexible

- You might want to consider what department or services in town are impacted by a social service property(s). Then you can determine what % of the overall budget goes to those departments in total. If it is 35%, a "payment" option could be 35% of normal tax rate. If 80%, 80% of tax rate.
- There also should be room to be creative. In other words, I like to consider not only a PILOT but an ILOT (P left out intentionally). That is, something else, in lieu of taxes. That could be services, fees or donations: something specific to benefit Framingham residents or any government department affected. For example, what services can be given to Framingham residents free of charge. Can a purchase be made for the police department? Fire department....

Mr. Flynn said that in Framingham the Board of Selectman is the authorized negotiating agent for PILOT's. They can authorize someone else to do it, but it has to originate with them.

The group agreed that we should invite Mr. Flynn to speak to us especially about PILOT programs.

Laurie will arrange a visit

Discussion of Visitor from Organization of Human Service Coordinators

The group agreed to cancel the 2/7/06 meeting and re-schedule for 2/9/06 so they can hear from Brockton's Human Service Coordinator and President of LOHSCH (MMA) Bob Martin.

Meeting Agenda

Thursday February 9, 2006

7:30PM in the **Conference Room 2**

Memorial Building

150 Concord Street

Framingham, Ma 01701

1. Guest Speaker Bob Martin, President of the MMA-affiliated Local Officials of Human Services Council (LOHSCH). Mr. Martin also holds the Human Services Coordinator position in Brockton, MA. He will discuss the duties and responsibilities of Human Services Coordinators for the towns and cities of Massachusetts. Mr. Martin will offer some background information about how this role serves municipalities and the organization LOHSCH which is an association of human services coordinators representing 50 Massachusetts cities and towns.

2. Review of Minutes

3. Other business

The meeting was changed to the 9th.

Nick moved that we not meet on Tuesday Feb. 14th because it is Valentine's day.

The group discussed other meeting dates and concluded they will try to meet on the 15th.

We will try to have speakers this month and gathering information so the committee can have time to do work. Also, this is a month where people have vacations and other obligations and might need flexibility regarding the meetings. If there is more information gathering and less specific committee work they can feel comfortable doing that.

We should offer some flexibility to the speaker from the State during the last week of February: 28 or March 1.

Bob said that town counsel will have his opinion regarding Salvation Army and it will be available by the end of the week.

The group discussed details of the upcoming forum.

Bob said that questions to the speakers should be to clarify their statements only.

Do we ask them if they belong to different groups in town? How long they have lived here?

The group discussed the parameters regarding the speakers. Did we say the people had to be residents?

The original document did not specify that.

Foreign language speakers are welcomed.

Motion to adjourn

Second

Vote 9 in favor 0 opposed 0 abstain

Laurie Lee

Clerk